

## NEBC MEETING NEWS

**January 1999.** "Proactive Wetland Restoration in Massachusetts" was presented by Charles Katuska of the Massachusetts state government's Executive Office of Environmental Affairs (EOEA). The objective of his talk was to discuss wetland restoration aspects of the state's Wetlands Restoration and Banking Program (WRBP), which began in March, 1994, as an effort to implement the state's policy of "no net loss of wetlands in the short-term and a net gain in the long-term." Katuska explained that wetlands constitute 12% of the state's land area or about 600,000 acres. Of these acres, about 20% represent salt water wetlands, including 45,000 acres of tidal flats. Massachusetts wetlands were once more abundant. He said about 28% of the state's wetlands at the time of colonization have been lost due to filling, draining, and other human activities. He started by explaining the program's definition of wetland restoration: "The act, process or result of returning a wetland or a former wetland to a close approximation of its condition prior to the disturbance." Thus, the restoration result would not be necessarily a totally pristine wetland; the area could possess invasive species and still be considered restored. He recognized two types of restoration, the first being "the reestablishment of a wetland or former wetland on what is now a nonwetland site," and the second being "the return of a damaged, degraded, or functionally impaired wetland to its predisturbance condition." Examples of restoration actions include restoring tidal flow, removing fill or dikes, regrading, planting wetland vegetation, and controlling invasive species. *Phragmites* control, thus far, has been a major activity of the WRBP. They have been working with coastal communities, in particular, where loss of the normal tidal influence has resulted in *Phragmites* overtaking *Spartina* in the tidal marshes, and they are now finalizing a *Phragmites* control strategy paper.

To accomplish their objectives, the two person staff of WRBP works with many other agencies, organizations, and individuals. To help cement such relationships, the state EOEA, along with a number of federal and state agencies, signed a joint resolution in June, 1994, committing to the restoration of Massachusetts wetlands. Along with the signatories, they have since formed an alliance with nearly 200 other agencies, organizations, and individuals who have agreed to work together toward implementing the



Commonwealth's "no net loss" Action Plan. A premise of the plan is that it is better to treat wetlands as part of a watershed than as isolated landscape features, thus "watershed wetland restoration plans" are being prepared, as well, with the assistance of members of the above "Partnership." Through WRBP, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers has developed a site identification, data collection, and site screening analysis at the watershed scale. Using aerial imagery and other data, potential wetland restoration sites are identified and characterized, then the potential restoration projects are analyzed to determine their ability to positively influence wetland functions and the watershed as a whole. This technical analysis is based on simple functional predictors (size, position on the landscape, soil characteristics, hydroperiod, etc.) and assessment of "the watershed's functional deficits" in terms of water quality, flood storage, and fish and wildlife habitat. Individual site characteristics considered in the analysis also include factors such as ownership, cost, and likely difficulty of restoration efforts. The Neponset River watershed serves as the first test or pilot project for this watershed-based planning approach. In this watershed alone, 159 potential restoration sites were initially identified by the Corps in the preliminary assessment and six general goals for wetland restoration were established, including control of invasive species. Interestingly, when a draft plan for Neponset was reviewed by the citizenry, they identified "stream baseflow and groundwater recharge" as an additional watershed goal, as well as identifying 12 additional potential wetland restoration sites. Plans for six other watersheds (Otter River, Paskamanset River, Upper Ipswich, Shawsheen, Upper Blackstone, and Connecticut River) are in the works, as well as salt marsh inventories along the coast.

The intent of the WRBP is to have implementation of restoration projects locally driven. Thus they do a lot to encourage proposals and funding of projects. One way is through the GROWetlands initiative whereby they seek and accept project nominations. The WRBP then helps with technical support, coordination, permitting, access to its read-only database of other wetland restoration projects, and funding. Katuska finished with an invitation to the NEBC to help, especially with invasive plant projects, and then offered handouts describing WRBP, GROWetlands, and 25 funding sources available for wetland restoration projects in the Commonwealth.



**February 1999.** The speaker for the evening was Dr. Janet Sullivan, Editor-in-Chief of *Rhodora* and adjunct faculty in botany at the University of New Hampshire, who addressed the topic, "Reflections on 100 years of *Rhodora*." Janet's talk began with Volume 1, Number 1 of *Rhodora* dated January, 1899. The Editor-in-Chief was Benjamin Lincoln Robinson and Associate Editors were Frank Shipley Collins, Merritt Lyndon Fernald, and Hollis Webster. Subscribers each paid a dollar for a dozen issues the first year. The stated purpose of the journal was "to give new stimulus and render material aid to the study of our local flora." Unlike today, the editors announced in the first issue that contributors could follow their own preferences regarding nomenclature and punctuation. All four members of the editorial committee, especially M. L. Fernald, were frequent contributors the first year and for many to follow. The early issues contained mostly short articles and notes, reports and historical accounts of other botanical clubs such as the Josselyn and the Connecticut Botanical Clubs, upcoming events, and appeals for information on the region's flora.

The idea for the journal, Sullivan explained, arose shortly after the Club's first meeting in February, 1896. The described purpose of the Club and its meetings was to provide for social discourse and the dissemination of information among gentlemen interested in the flora of New England. A specific goal, to create a checklist of the New England flora, helped lead the way to establishment of the journal. In the fall of 1897, the Club reproduced Collins' list of algae using a hectograph process, which involved writing on a gel pad which was printed using aniline dye, somewhat like the later mimeograph process. Members of the Club then began investigating the possibility of a journal. In February, 1898, Robinson's Publication Committee reported that the cost of publishing a monthly journal of about 16 pages each issue would be about \$550 per year, and recommended that the cost of plates be supported by "dignified ads," thus making them free to the authors and subscribers. E. L. Rand recommended a minimum of 400 subscriptions would be necessary to support the journal. A circular was distributed to members in April, 1898, requesting that resident members in the Boston area each solicit ten subscriptions and nonresidents each obtain five. This resulted in 450 subscriptions and the journal was launched in earnest. Debate ensued over the name for the new journal. Robinson stated that the name



should be a "distinct and euphonious one-word title." Rand, in botanical jest, suggested the name *Taxus*; other suggestions were *Oakesia* and *Bigelovia*. The name *Rhodora* was suggested but considered "too sentimental" by some, presumably because of Emerson's poem by the same title. In the end, however, there were 15 votes for *Rhodora* and 11 votes for all other names suggested. The name was presented to the Club at the November, 1898, meeting. Subscriptions had increased to around 600 and the Club had launched its journal to reach "the botanical world, who knows us not."

Once the journal was established, Collins' paper on algae and others, such as one by Walter Deane, presenting New England's state by state distribution of taxa in the Ericaceae, began to appear. Costs, however, were higher than originally estimated, due mainly to indexing and electrographic printing costs, and the Club ran a deficit for several years. More ads were included to defray the cost of plates, an item deemed essential to attract and hold subscribers. Ads in the early volumes represented nurseries, book-sellers, personal herbaria, and field guides. Following the Club's July, 1900, "excursion" to Mt. Katahdin in Maine and an account of it in Volume 3 by Joseph R. Churchill, an ad appeared offering "To Katahdin on horseback." Other ads offered to guide readers to rare plant locations. Controversy over the latter led to ads being dropped in 1907. In 1912, subscription prices were raised to \$1.50 per year. An obstacle to printing Volume 2 arose when a fire destroyed the press where it was to be printed. At the time, however, the page proofs were being circulated to authors and the plates were being stored in a vault, so only a three-week delay occurred.

In the early volumes the editors were also major contributors as authors. In the first volume, for instance, they contributed 28% of the articles. M. L. Fernald alone contributed 15 articles. Even today, he ranks as the most prolific writer in the pages of the journal. In one year he wrote 25 articles and notes, and over a 52-year span from 1899 to 1950 he averaged 13 contributions per year. His role as Associate Editor continued until 1928 when he became Editor-in-Chief, a position he held until 1950. "Could it have survived without his energy?" some have asked. Gradually, though, the authorship did diversify. In his thirty-year review article published in 1929, Fernald noted that 399 botanists had contributed to the pages of *Rhodora* thus far.



Reed Rollins succeeded Fernald as Editor-in-Chief. In 1962, when Rollins eventually resigned, Albion Hodgdon from the University of New Hampshire became the first Editor-in-Chief from outside Boston, the journal became a quarterly publication with a subscription cost of \$6.00. Another milestone occurred in 1996 when our speaker, Janet Sullivan, became the tenth, and first female Editor-in-Chief, particularly notable because women were not admitted to the Club until 1968. The journal itself continues to serve botanists of New England but has broadened its readership and geographic scope to an international level, something that actually began as early as 1919, when F. S. Collins published an article on marine algae of China.

—PAUL SOMERS, Recording Secretary.